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14 November 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the Director

ATTENTION: Mr. Knoche

SUBJECT: Additional Considerations Surrounding
Possible Surfacing of Project OXCART

REFERENCE: Memorandum for the Record by Chief,
Security Staff, OSA, dated 12 November
1963; Subject: Project Surfacing - Probable
Effects Upon CIA Security Methods and
Techniques as a Result of Surfacing the
A-12 [REDACTED]

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1. In light of all of the high-speed motion that is being generated regarding the OXCART surfacing, and because I am a believer in occasionally going slow when you are in a hurry, I would like to call to your attention, and through you [REDACTED] the content of the referenced document written by our Chief of Security Staff, [REDACTED] which I think carefully analyzes some of the points which may be overlooked initially in considering whether an immediate surfacing of OXCART capability is desirable or not.

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2. I am particularly concerned about a good many of [REDACTED] conclusions because I can see problems developing with regard to the Director's responsibility for protecting sources and methods in the intelligence business. I am also concerned over the distinct possibility that by exposing our methods of operation in the manner suggested by [REDACTED] that the resultant possibility

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would be that we may inadvertently foreclose ourselves from further participation in covert reconnaissance projects of the National Reconnaissance Program. There are just so many variations on the theme necessary to implement a covert procurement and operations project, and I hesitate to see us throwing away future projects like CORONA, for example, simply because of our concern for the moment over the relationship of OXCART and the SST. I realize in the last analysis that it will be the Director and the President who will have to determine the feasibility of surfacing OXCART in the manner we now seem to be actively considering. But somewhere along the line I think we must very carefully evaluate the possible damage which can be done to this Agency as a result of such action. The initial reaction of the electorate to an OXCART surfacing might well be one of pride and admiration for the ingenuity of CIA. The second and perhaps less desirable effect might well be to accentuate the clamor in Congress for additional restraints upon CIA in view of what will ultimately be recognized as a truly major covert procurement about which very few Congressmen were aware.

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Deputy Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

cc: Ex. Dir.
D/S
EO/DD/S&T